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## CORRESPONDENCE.

## EDGREN'S FRENCH GRAMMAR.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—Though mostly on the old lines, Prof. EDGREN's effort in his 'Compendious Grammar'\* is very acceptable, at least to teachers; it presents in a condensed form the substantial elements of the language, and the rules are impressed in a terse, concise manner. It is a decided improvement on the grammars of the same kind which we still have among us. This presentation of the subject has even its streaks of originality, owing, no doubt, to the fact that the author, being neither English nor German nor French, is able to consider his material from a point of view different from that to which we are accustomed.

The book is divided into two 'independent' parts. The First Part (pp. i-lxvi) contains merely an elementary outline of the essentials of pronunciation and accidence, with exercises, and is intended "to enable the learner to begin reading . . . in from three to six weeks." The Second Part (pp. 1-293) goes over the usual ground of the parts of speech and their syntax. It consists of rules and explanation following each other in regular succession, without interruption of exercises. These are placed together at the end, and are simply selected English sentences to be translated into French, the author having wisely done away with translations—more than useless—from French into English.

This Second Part includes also valuable glimpses into the historical growth and development of the French language from the Latin. Other additions, not less interesting, must be noticed: first, a chapter on the arrangement of the French sentence; then a short but clear and well-worded exposition of French verse; and last, not least, some very useful remarks on the relations of Anglo-French words. Such additions go far to redeem the dry details of a grammar which is very much condensed and abundantly supplied with technical terms. But for these additions a strong impression would remain of unmiti-

\*A compendious French Grammar in two independent parts (Introductory and Advanced) by A. HJALMAR EDGREN, Ph. D. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1890.

gated doubt as to the usefulness of grammar for a student, except for reference.

This doubt existed, unconsciously perhaps but yet certainly, in the mind of Prof. EDGREN, who, as if in consequence of a happy afterthought, prefaces the working pages with the following remark: "These grammar-studies should all be *subordinated* to critical *copious reading*"—a remark that should not be put in small type, but should have special attention called to it by being set in large print. Such reading exercise is the gist of all language learning, especially that of French.

But even a short notice such as the present one is not complete without some sharp criticism, which must fall on the inadequate chapter on pronunciation, particularly the part devoted to a treatment of the vowels. It contains too many flagrant heresies and abounds in too many violations of the acknowledged and easily accessible canons of standard French pronunciation, to be passed in silence; nothing short of a thorough overhauling will save these pages from absolute condemnation. Contrary to what might be expected in such a case, Prof. EDGREN's practice—for the reviewer has often had the pleasure of conversing in French with the author—is very good, and therefore much better than his theory.

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## BRIEF MENTION.

Among the recent numbers of the *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen* (Marburg) we note 'Esclarmonde, Clarisse et Florent, Ide et Olive' (No. lxxxiii), three sequels to 'Huon de Bordeaux,' edited from a single manuscript by MAX SCHWEIGEL, with the customary introduction and a comparison of the prose sequels with the poetical;—'Galiens li Restorés' (No. lxxxiv), published by Prof. STENGEL from the Cheltenham MS., together with the prose versions, and prefaced with a study by K. PFEIL on the mutual relations of the Galien versions, an enormous labor for which all Romance students are indebted;—the reproduction of three versions of MONTCHRESTIEN's 'Sophonisbe' (No. lxxxv), by L. FRIES, with a history of the subject and

of French tragedy previous to MONTCHRESTIEN;—'Beiträge zur Lexikographie des altprovenzalischen Verbums' by K. STICHEL (No. lxxxvi);—and 'Kleinere Schriften von Ferdinand Wolf' (No. lxxxvii), with portrait, by Prof. STENGEL. This latter includes the minor reviews in French and Italian literature by the celebrated pioneer in the field, and their publication brings all admirers of their author under lasting obligation to the indefatigable editor of the series.

The *Société des anciens textes français* adds to its publications for 1889 'Rondeaux et autres poésies du xve siècle,' edited by G. RAYNAUD, and 'Œuvres d'Eustache Deschamps' vol. vi. The latter volume continues the publication of the ballads. The former adds a valuable chapter to the literary history of the fifteenth century and calls for a more extended notice. It contains one hundred and ninety *rondeaux*, one *quatrain* and four *ballades*, all taken from one manuscript of the National Library. Their authors belonged to the circle which gathered around the prince-poet CHARLES D'ORLÉANS (eleven of whose poems appear in the collection), and besides including some names already known to literature, as MARTIN LE FRANCE, MESCHINOT, BLOSSEVILLE, VAILLANT and certain high-born amateurs, presents as authors many nobles prominent in the public affairs of the time, as well as a score of writers whose very existence had been unsuspected. Many of the anonymous or doubtful poems of the period are thus identified. After a biographical sketch of each poet, M. RAYNAUD discusses in the Introduction the development of the *rondeau* in its various forms, including the *bergerette* (a *rondeau* in which the second strophe has no refrain), and cites examples from the poems in question. A short notice of the pronunciation and versification, of the manuscript, and of aids in editing, follows. A glossary and index of proper names terminate the volume, now indispensable to the study of society verse before the Renaissance.

SCHMID'S 'Heinrich von Eichenfels,' edited by G. EUGÈNE FASNACHT, has recently appeared in Macmillan's "Primary Series of French and German Reading Books." While the story might appear attractive to quite

young students, for whom it is intended, it certainly fails of that charm which appeals to young and old alike in the best of juvenile literature, and suffers the additional disadvantage of not being as easy as many other more interesting stories. Notes and vocabulary are given together in the order of the text. Perhaps it is hardly fair to question whether such arrangement of the vocabulary is in any way preferable to the alphabetic order. The notes are well chosen and, from the point of view of the editor, both notes and vocabulary are carefully executed.

Mr. RALPH O. WILLIAMS, who is mentioned in 'Webster's International Dictionary' (p. iii) as a member of the corps of contributors to that work, has published a volume entitled 'Our Dictionaries, and Other English Language Topics' (Henry Holt & Co., 1890). One third (the closing third) of the first chapter is a restriction on the method employed in the "Scriptorium" in editing the 'Oxford Dictionary.' Two charges are advanced, that of not consistently securing the help of specialists for the definition of all science and art terms, and that of a too implicit confidence in the accuracy of the citations furnished by the large and miscellaneous group of "readers." These quotations, it is urged, should all be carefully verified. The second chapter deals with the uses of "Metropolis" in England and America; and the third chapter, on "Some peculiarities real and supposed in American English," supplies notes on such words as *audience*, *different*, *vine*, *antecedents*, *yard-wand*, *right away*, *all along*, *druggist*, *sidewalk*, etc. Then follows a chatty discourse on "Good English for Americans," and finally some ten "Cases of disputed propriety and of unsettled usage" are taken up, such as the distinction between *in the circumstances* and *under the circumstances*; *of a sudden* and *on a sudden*; *would seem* and *should seem*; and the use of *else*, *much*, and *observe*.

The second volume of 'Historiettes Modernes' by Mr. C. FONTAINE of Washington (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.), consists of fifteen Stories by some of the most prominent of living writers, including THEURIET, GUY DE MAUPASANT, EMMANUEL ARÈNE, JULES SIMON,

ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN and JULES LEMAITRE. The biographical notes continue to be extremely meagre; and the notices are of the kind adapted to rapid reading.

From D. C. Heath & Co. we receive also a set of French classics in paper covers: MOLIÈRE'S 'Le Tartuffe,' 'Le Médecin malgré lui' and 'Le Bourgeois gentilhomme,' with foot-notes by F. E. A. GASC. These notes are quite elementary, and even perform work which should be left to the dictionary.

The eighth annual Convention of the *Modern Language Association of America* will be held at Vanderbilt University, Nashville Tennessee, on December 29, 30 and 31, 1890. Besides the addresses on the evening of the 29th, papers are promised by Professors E. H. BABBITT (New York City), W. M. BASKERVILL (Vanderbilt Univ., Tenn.), MORGAN CALLAWAY, JR. (Univ. of Texas), JOSEPH A. FONTAINE (Univ. of Miss.), ALCÉE FORTIER (Tulane Univ. of La.), J. P. FRUIT (Bethel College, Ky.), F. M. PAGE (Univ. of the South, Tenn.), H. A. RENNERT (Univ. of Penna.), H. E. SHEPHERD (College of Charleston) and H. A. TODD (Johns Hopkins University). A social reception and two luncheons will be tendered the delegates in attendance at the Convention.—Details regarding hotels, reduced railway rates, etc., will be sent out to members of the Association in connection with the programme which will be issued at an early date.

#### PERSONAL.

The French professorship at King's College (London) vacated by Mr. LOUIS MORIARTY, who had accepted a mastership at Harrow, was filled in the last days of 1889 by the appointment of Mr. VICTOR J. T. SPIERS. Mr. SPIERS is a graduate of Paris, and also M. A. of Oxford, where he carried off the Taylorian University Exhibition for French in the year 1881. He was for some time French Master at Merchant Taylor's School, London, which he left in 1885 for the purpose of filling the post of Senior French Master at Messrs. Wren and Gurney's, London, in place of his brother, Mr. I. H. B. SPIERS, who had come to Philadelphia as Senior Assistant Master in the William Penn Charter School.—Professor VICTOR SPIERS has edited various French texts, the best known of which is A. DE

VIGNY'S 'La Canne de Jonc.' The brothers SPIERS are sons of the late Professor A. SPIERS, editor of the well-known French Dictionary which bears his name.

BRADFORD O. MCINTIRE was called at the opening of the present academic year to the chair of History and English Literature in Dickinson College. Mr. MCINTIRE was graduated at Wesleyan University (Conn.) in 1883, from which time until his recent change of position he was teacher of History and English Literature in the Seminary at Kent's Hill, Maine. Prof. MCINTIRE has pursued special studies in English under the direction of Prof. Winchester of Wesleyan University.

Dr. THOMAS LOGIE has been appointed Instructor in Romance Languages at Williams College, Williamstown, Mass. Mr. LOGIE was graduated at Toronto University in 1887 and immediately thereafter entered the Johns Hopkins University as special student in Romance Languages. Here he continued his studies until June of this year, when he received the degree of Ph.D. on the presentation of a thesis entitled "The Dialect of Cachy" (Picardy).

According to the London *Athenæum* for Oct. 4, the official announcement is made of the election of Prof. ADOLPH TOBLER (Professor of Romance Languages) as Rector of the University of Berlin. It was feared for some time that the distinguished Romance scholar, who at first declined this academic dignity, might not be able to assume the duties attaching to it; it is therefore particularly gratifying to his friends to learn that he has finally consented to accept it.

It is stated that HENRIK IBSEN will soon publish another drama, of which Mr. EDMUND GOSSE will make the English translation. This announcement is of interest to English readers in connection with Prof. WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE'S recent translation of JÆGER'S 'Life of Ibsen,'\* also in connection with the first fragments published in English of *Peer Gynt*, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for June by Dr. W. H. CARPENTER'S (Columbia College), and with "Henrik Ibsen's Brand" by Prof. ARTHUR H. PALMER (Adelbert College) in the *New Englander and Yale Review* for October.

\*HENRIK IBSEN 1828-1888, a critical Biography by HENRIK JÆGER. From the Norwegian by WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. Price \$1.50.